



Maine Women's Lobby

February 6, 2023

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has advocated for gender-responsive and gender-equitable public policies, with a focus on those most affected by misogyny, sexism, and other forms of oppression. We support systems and proposals which increase the health, wellness, safety, and economic security of all people in Maine. We are before you today **in opposition to LD 34: An Act to Require a Person to Show Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting.**

Women are dedicated voters in Maine and across the country, and vote at higher rates than men—Black and brown women even more so. In the 2020 Presidential election, women were 59 percent of the total voters.¹ Yet in many cases, they experience more barriers to voting, especially women from marginalized or historically excluded communities. National data indicate that on average, Black women voters must wait twice as long to vote as white voters (overall).² In Maine, part of our legacy of voter freedom is tearing down barriers to voting – not creating them.

This bill, and others like it, create a unique barrier to women voters, because most women – about 70 percent – change their name when they marry.³ For anyone who has ever tried to do this, you know it involves months of paperwork with notarized copies of legal documents. The practical reality is that it can take years before everything is lined up – each time a credit card renews or a new activity (like voting every two years!) reminds you about another thing to update, and the process begins again.

For women with additional factors – those who are rural and farther from town halls; those without transportation; caregivers and juggling multiple home duties; poor folks or those who move often and may have a harder time accessing official legal documents – **this is simply one more thing to stand between them and their right to exercise their vote.**

Bills such as this do very little to make our elections more secure, while doing quite a lot to leave some people behind. For that reason, we hope that you will vote 'Ought Not to Pass' on LD 34. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague, Executive Director

¹ Washington Post (2020). Exit poll results and analysis from Maine. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/interactive/2020/exit-polls/maine-exit-polls/>

² Stewart, C. (2013). Waiting to Vote in 2012. Journal of Law and Politics.

³ New York Times. (2015). About the Maiden-Name Analysis. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/upshot/about-the-maiden-name-analysis.html>